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Letter dated 18 June 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 13 June 2014 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, forwarding a report on the International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan covering the period from 1 February to 30 April 2014 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Please recycle

Annex

Letter dated 13 June 2014 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 2120 (2013), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from 1 February 2014 to 30 April 2014 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Council.

(*Signed*) Anders Fogh **Rasmussen**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

I. Introduction

Overview

1. The present report responds to the request made in Security Council resolution 2120 (2013) for the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to keep the Council regularly informed, through the United Nations Secretary-General, on the implementation of the ISAF mandate. The report covers the period from 1 February to 30 April 2014.

2. The ISAF campaign is focused on preparing the Afghan National Security Forces to assume full responsibility for the security of Afghanistan by the end of 2014. The Afghan forces are now almost fully fielded, and the focus of ISAF is on developing and sustaining the quality of their personnel. ISAF continues to develop the sustainability of the national forces and seeks to mitigate remaining capability gaps in critical areas such as aviation and intelligence, as well as developmental shortfalls in areas such as logistics and human resources management. "Capability gaps" are those critical areas where the requisite capability is nascent or non-existent. "Developmental shortfalls", by comparison, are areas in which the Afghan forces or the Afghan security institutions have some level of capability but still require significant further development in order to achieve proficiency and the requisite effectiveness.

3. The Afghan forces have continued to make progress in terms of being professional, effective and capable of providing security throughout Afghanistan. They have demonstrated their capability to enable and secure the first round of presidential and provincial elections, which were the key events in the reporting period.

International Security Assistance Force levels

4. As at 1 April 2014, a total of 51,176 ISAF personnel were in theatre, provided by 28 countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and 20 non-NATO countries.

International Security Assistance Force casualties

5. ISAF casualties[1] decreased by approximately 60 per cent during the reporting period compared with the same period in 2013.

Civilian casualties

6. ISAF assesses that the number of insurgent-caused civilian casualties has increased by more than 60 per cent over the same quarter in 2013 and accounts for more than 90 per cent of all conflict-related civilian deaths. The insurgents' indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices is the cause of the overwhelming

[1] In the present report the term "casualties" refers to individua's killed and wounded as a consequence of the conflict in Afghanistan.

majority of civilian casualties. Such devices were also used in two high-profile attacks in Kabul in late March.

7. The number of civilian casualties for which ISAF was responsible during the quarter under review is assessed to have decreased by over 50 per cent compared with the same quarter in 2013 and to have accounted for less than 1 per cent of all civilian casualties. ISAF has continued to increase its efforts to minimize civilian casualties by reviewing directives and operational procedures, promoting transparency and working with the Afghan forces to enhance their civilian casualty mitigation efforts.

8. ISAF has taken additional measures to address the clearance of explosive remnants of war from firing ranges and bases prior to closure. Considerable progress has been made in incorporating internationally recognized clearance standards into ISAF procedures for future base closures and to identify hazard areas. ISAF is increasing its efforts to mark and clear explosive remnants of war from high-explosive firing ranges that have already closed. Recent ISAF reports have confirmed the presence of 184 such ranges located in the vicinity of ISAF bases, of which a significant number remain to be cleared.

Transition

9. The overall positive progress made by the Afghan forces in professionalizing themselves continued throughout the reporting period. The forces have been in the lead of security efforts in Afghanistan since June 2013 and continue to be on track to successfully assume full responsibility for security by the end of 2014.

II. Security situation

10. Overall, enemy-initiated attacks were down by 20 per cent over the same period in 2013.

11. During the quarter under review, the insurgents focused on disrupting the 2014 presidential elections. Nevertheless, the Afghan forces successfully shaped the security environment and provided the support necessary for the first round of the presidential election on 5 April 2014. The insurgency has thus far not had a significant impact on the electoral process. While the insurgents did manage to conduct several high-profile attacks in Kabul during the reporting period, those attacks did not have the intended effect of deterring Afghans from voting. No high-profile attacks were carried out on election day.

12. In order to deny the enemy influence and improve security for the smooth and democratic transfer of power, the Afghan forces focused their operations on shaping the environment and inspiring confidence in the Afghan people. After months of intensive campaign planning and extensive joint rehearsals, the forces conducted several large and complex operations across the country prior to the election. The successful execution of those operations demonstrated that the Afghan forces have the operational capability necessary to disrupt the insurgency and protect the population. As at April 2014, the Afghan forces are leading 98 per cent of conventional operations and 99 per cent of special operations. Overall, enemy-initiated attacks were down slightly from the same period in 2013, when ISAF was still conducting operations. Considering the reduction in ISAF support and the elections, the reduction in enemy-initiated attacks is notable.

III. Afghan security institutions and the Afghan forces

13. The experience and confidence that the Afghan forces have gained since the beginning of the transition process has enabled them to take a proactive and comprehensive approach to election security. The planning for security during the elections was conducted almost entirely by the Afghan forces, which, by providing a safe and secure environment, enabled millions of Afghans to vote. This success clearly demonstrated the Afghan forces' growing ability to provide effective country-wide security. The challenge for the forces in the short term is to provide the same level of security for the second round of elections in the face of an insurgency that is likely to be larger in terms of its numbers and that, having learned lessons from the first round, will be more determined to successfully disrupt the process. In the longer term, their challenge will be to sustain the operational tempo throughout the winter, as ISAF transitions to its post-2014 mission, Resolute Support, and in the following fighting seasons.

14. The success so far has been the result of the continued progress made by the Afghan security institutions and the Afghan forces in developing a professional and effective force. Despite the positive development in building and training the force, and the successful delivery of security and counter-insurgency operations, the Afghan forces still face challenges. They are tactically and operationally effective but are not yet fully sustainable. Work remains to be done to develop the Afghan security institutions and the Afghan forces fully and to a self-sustainable level. The security ministries have demonstrated some growth in human resources management and in the alignment of strategy and resources. Ministerial capacity remains a capability gap, however, with limitations in planning, programming, budgeting and execution, as well as in facilities, logistics and oversight functions. The Afghan forces have demonstrated improvement in tactical operations planning and execution, in explosive ordnance disposal training and in their capacity to counter the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. Key capability gaps remain, however, in aviation, intelligence and special operations, and developmental shortfalls exist in areas such as systems maintenance, requirement forecasting and human capital. Moreover, one factor directly affecting the Afghan forces' self-sustainability in the long term is the inability of the Government of Afghanistan to generate sufficient revenue to finance them. All these shortfalls are being addressed, but will not be completely eliminated by the end of 2014.

15. The gains made are not irreversible and continued security support beyond 2014 is essential for ensuring long-term viability. As ISAF prepares for the end of the mission in December 2014, there are two campaign imperatives. First, ISAF is taking steps to reduce risks and ensure a smooth transition. Second, ISAF is building Afghan forces' sustainability, while providing support to them as they continue to prepare for both the transition of political power and the 2014 fighting season. ISAF forces will complete the shift from combat-advising at the unit level to functionally based security force assistance, whereby advisers focus on tasks to build the Afghan forces' long-term sustainability to ensure that progress persists. Finally, international funding and support are still critical to sustain a force capable of providing a stable and secure environment and of preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a haven for terrorism.

16. The Afghan air force continues to train its personnel with the assistance of NATO Air Training Command — Afghanistan. Progress has continued according to

plan in fielding the air force's required enablers and trained personnel. Obstacles to the development of the air force include finding qualified recruits, maintenance training and sustainment. It has been assessed that the air force will not reach full operational capability before 2017.

17. The quality of the Afghan army and national police and, in particular, their leadership, officers and non-commissioned officers, remains critical to the long-term sustainability of the Afghan forces. As the Afghan forces have effectively taken the lead responsibility for security, so the Afghan people have begun to show more ownership of and pride in their security forces. After a February 2014 attack on an army outpost in which 21 Afghan soldiers were killed, Afghan citizens used social media to condemn the attack and demonstrated in several cities.

18. According to recent surveys, Afghan perceptions of security remain consistent, with 64 per cent of respondents having a favourable opinion of the national police and 67 per cent having a favourable view of the army. Approximately 57 per cent of the Afghans surveyed responded that the Afghan forces (either the army or the national police, depending on the area) brought the most security to their area, and 80 per cent of Afghan respondents believed that the Government was leading the effort to improve security in Afghanistan. While perceptions of the Afghan forces remain steady, over half of Afghan respondents believed that both the army and the national police were capable but needed additional resources. These survey results indicate that many Afghans believe that international community support and resources are necessary for long-term sustainability.

19. The Afghan forces' health-care system continues to grow and develop. The forces' medical leadership remains actively engaged in the development of their hospital capabilities. The Afghan forces continue to manage their battlefield and to provide medical care for serious and routine casualties, but they still require some coalition support for critical casualties and medical transportation by air.

20. In February 2014, the Afghan Council of Ministers ordered the dissolution of the Afghan Public Protection Force as a State-run enterprise and the Ministry of the Interior of Afghanistan announced the reorganization of the Public Protection Force as part of the Afghan national police. While the State-owned portion of the Force has been dissolved, its more than 20,000-strong guard force will remain separate, responsible to a deputy minister within the Ministry of the Interior and continue to provide security services. The Ministry of the Interior has directed the Force to continue operations. Currently, convoy security escorts are being professionally conducted by the Force.

21. The Afghan local police continues to provide local security, particularly in rural population centres. During the quarter under review, it grew to 26,691 guardians deployed in 146 districts.

22. To summarize, the Afghan forces are capable and appear to be inspiring confidence in the Afghan people. They have continued to make positive progress and are on track to assume full responsibility for security in December 2014. Key limitations remain, however, requiring support and assistance from security force assistance advisory teams and ministerial advisers. Further effort is needed to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the force, necessitating continued advisory support, international commitment and funding support.

IV. Civil-military interaction

Governance support

23. The first rounds of the Afghan presidential election and the provincial council elections were the key events in the reporting period. The Afghan forces continued to bear primary responsibility for election security, with ISAF providing, upon request, logistical support, including delivery of election material at the national level. ISAF also provided secure accommodation for the election support team of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe following the Taliban attack on the Serena Hotel in Kabul on 20 March 2014. Requests for ISAF support have, however, remained low. On election day, there were no ISAF casualties.

Development support

24. The number of provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan has further decreased, from four to two. The remaining teams, in Balkh and Jowzjan, are cooperating with the Government's Independent Directorate of Local Governance to ensure a smooth transition process.

Distribution of tasks of the International Security Assistance Force

25. The transfer of ISAF tasks to the Government of Afghanistan is ongoing and is now integrated into the broader transition effort in Afghanistan. The ISAF ministerial advisory groups continue to play a key role in assisting the Government in articulating their requirements and defining strategies to exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for key tasks previously carried out by ISAF. Moreover, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan continues to play a key role in engaging the Kabul-based international community and in keeping the primary donors, international organizations and non-governmental organizations informed of progress.

V. Redeployment

26. ISAF redeployment remains on track, although the process continues to be one of unprecedented scale and complexity. Redeployment activities remain fully coherent with the ISAF campaign plan, which aims to optimize the use of resources, facilities, movement infrastructure and lines of communication. Personnel and equipment are leaving theatre at an acceptable rate, subject to periodic fluctuations resulting from a variety of factors, including insurgent and criminal interdiction of redeployment consignments, climatic conditions, political constraints and bureaucratic friction. Strategic airlift capacity is sufficient to mitigate constraints on the ground and remains the fastest, most flexible and safest mode of transport.

VI. Border crossing points

27. The number of major incidents across the border with Pakistan almost doubled compared with the same period in 2013. Cooperation between the Afghan and Pakistani border forces was good but ISAF continues to explore further ways to improve the relationship. Relatively minor border issues can quickly reverse these advances, however, and negatively affect the broader bilateral setting.

28. All five border crossing points along the Pakistan ground lines of communication and the northern lines of communication remained open during the reporting period, with some limitations experienced through the Torkham border crossing point owing to the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf protest on the northern ground line of communication.

VII. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

29. ISAF continues to support efforts to facilitate the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) by the Afghan security institutions and the Afghan forces. ISAF efforts related to the implementation of the resolution are focused on developing and establishing conditions to improve Afghan women's participation in security services (recruitment and retention), providing adequate conditions (facilities and infrastructure) and educating and training. ISAF is committed to supporting and assisting the Government of Afghanistan, in particular the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior, on implementing gender strategies and policies.

30. Progress has been observed in terms of the implementation of the latest policies and strategies approved in 2013 by the Ministry of Defence (Human Rights and Gender Integration Directorate Working Plan 2013-2016 and the Female Management Accession Policy, including through the establishment by the Ministry of two working groups, one on women's training and the other on gender integration). These initiatives focused on addressing the most challenging reasons hampering the inclusion of women in the Afghan forces, both in the medium and in the long term, and on setting the conditions for achieving the recruitment goals for 2014.

31. Prior to the elections, the Ministry of the Interior implemented a programme to recruit "female searchers". Approximately 13,000 female searchers were deployed to over 6,000 polling centres, where they enabled Afghan women to vote. Female participation in the elections of 5 April was estimated at 35 per cent of 7 million voters. While this is understood to be a very positive development, the focus will now shift to planning for the second round of the presidential election in order to ensure that an adequate number of female searchers are available to support what might be an even higher turnout of female voters.

32. Progress was also observed in education and training efforts at the army's National Officer Academy during 2014, where courses for women officers restarted after 13 months without candidates. Initiatives have been taken to improve the conditions of women within the army, but major challenges in recruitment remain.

VIII. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005)

33. During the past quarter, Afghan children continued to be adversely affected by the conflict in a number of ways. On 8 February 2014, a child was used by the Taliban as suicide bomber in Paktika Province, and children were victims in the attack on the Serena Hotel of 20 March 2014.

34. ISAF headquarters has, in cooperation with UNAMA, monitored incidents of underage recruitment into the Afghan forces and other violations of children's

rights. ISAF personnel are under instruction to ensure that any apparent abuse of human rights be immediately brought to the attention of others in their chain of command for onward reporting and action.

35. ISAF continues to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 2145 (2014), in which the Council stressed the importance of implementing its resolution 1612 (2005) and called for the full implementation by the Government of Afghanistan of the provisions of the action plan on preventing and responding to underage recruitment, in close cooperation with UNAMA.

IX. Conclusion

36. The full transfer of responsibility for security from ISAF to the Afghan forces remains on track. During the first rounds of the presidential and provincial elections, the Afghan forces provided the security necessary to facilitate a democratic process with limited assistance from ISAF. The logistical support provided by ISAF was limited to the movement of election materials. While the Afghan forces have continued to make progress in developing their professionalism and capacities, capability gaps and developmental shortfalls remain. They require continued NATO focus and international community support to mitigate them. ISAF is working to reduce these gaps and shortfalls with targeted measures such as aviation training and equipment, continued funding, continued training, advice and assistance to the Afghan security institutions and through international community support to enable the Government of Afghanistan to generate and manage revenue. ISAF remains on track to fulfil its mandate and to transition to a follow-on mission, if the necessary legal framework is in place and NATO nations so decide. Uninterrupted international support and engagement are essential to maintaining security and stability in Afghanistan after 2014.